

Groups create land conservation agreement near Camp Navajo



As a partner with Camp Navajo in the Army Compatible Use Buffer Program (ACUB), CALT has established the first of two conservation easements that will ultimately conserve 240 acres owned by Coconino County. (Central Arizona Land Trust/photos)

Kara Jensen, Special to the Williams-Grand Canyon News

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WILLIAMS, Ariz. — The first step in conserving 240 acres southwest of Flagstaff at Rogers Lake has been completed as the culmination of a unique, collaborative effort involving Camp Navajo-Arizona National Guard, the Army National Guard, Coconino County and the Central Arizona Land Trust (CALT).

As a partner with Camp Navajo in the Army Compatible Use Buffer Program (ACUB), CALT has established the first of two conservation easements that will ultimately conserve 240 acres owned by Coconino County. This property, known as the Frontiere property, is located adjacent to the Rogers Lake County Natural Area, 10 miles southwest of Flagstaff, Arizona.

Rebecca Ruffner, board chair of the Central Arizona Land Trust, stressed the importance of CALT's most recent conservation effort and its importance to the community.

"This successful conservation effort will serve a two-fold purpose; it will guarantee permanent conservation of an important wildlife corridor for elk, pronghorn antelope, and other large mammals, and ensure the long-term, compatible land use to sustain the state and national security objectives at Camp Navajo," said Rebecca Ruffner.

CALT is proud to be a part of planning for the future of Camp Navajo and the region, and the ability to partner with Camp Navajo in a strategic effort to support economic sustainability and strategic conservation.

"The success of the Army Compatible Use Buffer program on The Arizona National Guard's eastern boundary of Camp Navajo clearly indicates the level of community commitment to the military missions in northern Arizona," said Colonel Ray G. Garcia, commander of the Arizona Training Centers and Camp Navajo. "Camp Navajo and the Naval Observatory Flagstaff Station are strategic assets supporting the Department of Defense and the defense of our Nation, so ensuring the long-term viability of these two installations is critical to our future.

The Arizona National Guard has served the community, =state and nation for over 75 years through its resources at Camp Navajo and can only continue to do so if we mitigate potential encroachment through the ACUB program. I want to thank all of the community partners that have made this program successful," Garcia said.

Protecting the Frontiere property from development supports improved opportunities for recreation and outdoor experiences at the Rogers Lake County Natural Area as part of the Coconino County Parks and Recreation system.

"The conservation easement at the Frontiere Property furthers our mission while protecting a beautiful and ecologically valuable asset for today's and future generations. That is something the County, Central Arizona Land Trust, and the Army National Guard can be very proud of," said Cynthia Nemeth, Director of Coconino County Parks and Recreation.

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Conserving land around Rogers Lake is extremely important because wetlands are among the most bio-diverse ecosystem types that exist, supporting a very diverse range of animal and plant species.

“We have a strong partnership with the Central Arizona Land Trust,” said Matt Ryan, Coconino County supervisor. “The conservation easement on the Frontiere property continues our work in the ephemeral wetlands of Rogers Lake County Natural Area to further protect this community asset for generations to come for activities such as hiking, environmental education, biking, and other outdoor opportunities.”

CALT background: As a nonprofit organization, CALT has been dedicated to its mission, “to preserve and protect open space, wildlife habitat, working agricultural lands, and the scenic and cultural values of central and northern Arizona for future generations” since 1989.

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